

FEBRUARY CHIMES



Grace
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A monthly newsletter from Grace United Methodist Church

February 2023

GROUNDHOGS, LENT, AND TRANSITION

Not many folks outside of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania get too excited about Groundhog Day. We know the groundhog's prediction has no impact on the weather. We might agree with weatherman Phil Connors' sarcastic observation in the movie Groundhog Day: "This is one time where television really fails to capture the true excitement of a large squirrel predicting the weather."

Christians can have similar feelings about the church season of Lent. While pastors may talk excitedly about self-examination and renewal, many of us view it as a time of self-denigration, a "downer" which offers nothing exciting.

But both Groundhog Day and Lent indicate something very positive: transition!

Groundhog Day (Feb. 2) falls roughly halfway between the calendar start of winter and of spring. Regardless of the groundhog's "prediction", we can remind ourselves we are passing the half-way mark. We're transitioning to warmer weather!

Likewise, rather than a time to "beat ourselves up" because we're sinners and losers, Lent should be a time to remember God is helping us transition into the image of Jesus Christ. Sure, we slip up along that path of change, but God has never given up on us.

The great spiritual writer Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-1996) discovered profound meaning in the Parable of the Prodigal Son at a crucial point in his own spiritual development, finding in it "the whole Gospel." It helped him to focus on the qualities of the father in the parable - love, forgiveness, and reconciliation - to transition from fear to love in our faith and our lives.

Let's make Lent a time of hope and renewed excitement about our transition, and encourage one another to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ!" (Ephesians 4:15)

Yours in Christ,
Interim Team Pastor Bob Dean

**Join us for
worship
in-person or
online!**

Worship

Sunday @ 10:15 am on
Facebook, YouTube, and
GraceDesMoines.org

Address

3700 Cottage Grove,
Des Moines, IA 50311

Phone

515-255-2131

Email

info@gracedesmoines.org

Website

www.gracedesmoines.org

Facebook and YouTube
GraceDesMoines

Please consider
joining us in-person
for Sunday worship.
Masks will be
provided. We would
love to see you here.

February 12 – Worship Recognition of 2023 Leaders – Mark your Calendars!

Friends, February marks the half-way place of our time-without-a-senior-pastor. Thank you for all who have and continue to be in leadership in these unprecedented, challenging days. We are on the down-hill side now!

On Sunday, February 12, 2023 come to worship as we recognize those souls in our midst chairing work areas and committees, the leadership of Grace's women's group and other important tasks for 2023. As 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Thank you to each who are answering "yes" to God's prompting to be a part of the community of leadership and faith these days. February 12, 10:15 AM, let us take a moment in worship to pause and celebrate together!



THE GRACE UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP SKI TRIP IS FEBRUARY 11-13 2023 AT THE AFTON ALPS IN HASTINGS, MN! HAVE FUN!



LGBTQ+ Support and Advocacy

In response to Church and Society's listening sessions a group of Grace members has been meeting to implement action steps to support and advocate for our LGBTQ+ community. This group has finalized two action steps: education and legislative action. This group has been collaborating with Onelowa in regards to both action steps. On Sunday, February 12 at 11:30am in Fellowship Hall Malycki Mañon-Sosa from Onelowa will be presenting an education session focused on the LGBTQ+ community. The purpose of this session is to help people better understand this community to help support and advocate for this community. The outcomes of this session are as follows. Give Individuals a clear understanding of the meaning of the term "LGBTQ". Give clear definitions of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Inform individuals about the implications of the gender binary within our society. Deconstruct the ideology of sex as "male & female". Educate individuals on the overarching experiences of LGBTQ individuals and how they may effectively become more inclusive through simple changes. All members of Grace are invited to attend this session.

LGBTQ+ Support and Advocacy continued..

Since it takes place during fellowship time, a light meal will be provided. The session is expected to last an hour. Our LGBTQ+ community is facing mounting opposition. Many are attempting to deny this community's right to exist by denying them equal rights, discrimination, and expressing the opinion that members of this community are wrong or immoral for being who they are. Let us join together to stand up against this injustice. Hope to see you on February 12th.

Bible Verse for February

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:

I love you, O Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.



Update on Pastor

As Ron Carlson our District Supervisor shared with Grace at our Charge Conference in November. The realistic timing of a new Grace Senior Pastor will likely be the standard appointment timing, which is July 1st.

Grace Foundation Scholarships

Scholarship Applications are now available for the 2023-2024 GUMF Bolsinger/Hartline-Funaro Scholarships. Please visit the Grace website for the most current electronic form. Applications are due no later than March 31, 2023.

Iowa United Methodist Foundation also has a wide variety of scholarships for all college students. Please visit their website iumf.org, for more information.

The New Bible Year has begun!

Please plan on attending every Tuesday at 1:30 pm.

Scam Messages

Do not reply to any text messages or emails claiming to be from Grace United Methodist, asking for gift cards. We do not send these types of requests. If you have any questions regarding the validity of a text or email, please contact the office.

United Women in Faith Begins

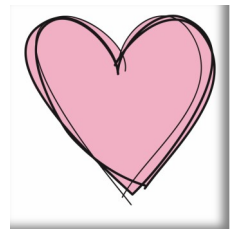
Grace UWF will begin meeting again for the year of 2023 on Thursday, February 2.

They will meet in Fellowship Hall.

We hope to see you then, and start the new year off great together! Please call the church office with any questions.

CAST ALL YOUR ANXIETY
ON HIM, BECAUSE HE
CARES FOR YOU.

1 PETER 5:7



Free Store Donations

The Freestore is currently in need of items to keep up with extremely high demand! We are serving 10-12 families every week and our supplies are low. The FreeStore helps families who need a fresh start after experiencing trauma, homelessness, domestic violence, natural disaster or other difficult situations by supplying gently used furniture and household goods. Several Grace members are volunteers at the FreeStore (Laura Sands, Dave Busiek, and Roger and Diane Munns).

We currently need:

- Mattresses and Box Springs (twin, full and queen- not king size)
- Dressers and chests
- Tables of all sizes

Freestore address - 834 10th St, Des Moines, IA 50309.

Bible Year Update

Bible Year will meet every Tuesday at 1:30 pm. Feel free to sign up or show up anytime! The goal of this group is to read the entire Bible in one year. We will be using The Bible Year as our guide, which breaks down readings into manageable sections. Commentary, weekly videos, and class discussions help participants understand the readings. The group will be meeting in-person with a Zoom option available for each session. Those who were a part of this study in 2022 have said that being a part of the group helped them stay on schedule with the readings. Contact Coreen Witke (515.255.2131 ext. 230; coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org) to register for the class or for more information. We hope you'll join us!

Office Volunteers!

Looking for additional volunteers to sign up to be Grace office volunteer substitutes. When our weekly volunteers need to be gone, we ask for someone to help fill their spot.

The ten shifts are on Monday through Friday.
9-12 and 12-3.

If willing to be added, send a note to the office at info@gracedesmoines.org or a note to Meg Malone-Titus at malonetitus@gmail.com.

Special Thanks

Huge shout out to our Trustees, and A/V team, who continue to keep the church running smoothly during this interim period. We appreciate you!

Thank you to all the office volunteers who stand up to help any time they are needed. You are a backbone of this church!

Thank you to all the members who have stuck by us, even in these difficult times. We can see your loyalty and it means so much to us at Grace!

SPRC rocks! We could not do this without everyone at SPRC who has made tremendous efforts to keep the church running smoothly during this difficult time.

Worship in February

Lent starts in February, on Ash Wednesday (February 22). Lent is a season of 40 days and is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for Easter (April 9). We will have a service at 7:00 pm on Ash Wednesday that will include the imposition of ashes and special music by the Chancel Choir.

Sunday services in February:
Rev. Gary Armstrong will preach on February 5 (Communion),
Rev. Judy Wadding on February 12, Rev. Bob Dean on February 19, and Rev. Jim Perdue on February 26.